

**REMARKS**

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Initially the Examiner is thanked for returning the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on January 14, 2002.

The Examiner is also thanked for the indication that claims 1-23 would be allowable is rewritten or amended to address the concerns set forth regarding 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, claims 1, 6, 7 and 13 have been amended to address each of the concerns set forth at page 2 of the Office Action. In particular, the preamble of claim 1 has been amended to recite "apparatus for producing a milk product having a reduced concentration of bacteria". Claim 13 has been amended to recite "combining the permeate stream from the respective microfiltration units of the primary filter assembly to produce the sterile milk product". Claims 6 and 7 have each been amended to recite that at least one of the units has a pore size of 0.5 microns, or less or 0.3 microns, or less, respectively.

Therefore, claims 1-23 are believed to comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

As a final matter, the Abstract has been amended to incorporate the Examiner's suggestion. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the abstract is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early indication of the allowability of the present application is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment, or the application in general, he is urged to call the undersigned at the number listed below in order to expedite prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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